

**SUMMARY OF THE
ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
MARCH 1, 1999**

The Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board (ELAB) met on Monday, March 1, 1999, at 2 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST) by teleconference. The meeting was led by co-chairs, Dr. Wilson Hershey and Ms. Ramona Trovato using the agenda that had been distributed to Board members. A list of action items is given in Attachment A. A list of participants is provided in Attachment B. The agenda is included in Attachment C.

INTRODUCTION

Ms. Betsy Dutrow, the Designated Federal Officer (DFO), opened the meeting and reviewed the rules of operation of this Board under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), and her role as DFO.

REVIEW OF MINUTES AND ACTION ITEMS

Dr. Hershey and Ms. Trovato, welcomed Board members and noted that the purpose of this meeting, and the next one scheduled for March 9, 1999, is to ensure that the Board addresses issues remaining from its January 14, 1999 meeting. He reviewed the proposed agenda and noted that two additional items have been added. The two additional items were a request for ELAB input from the NELAC Board of Directors on the timing of on-site evaluations and an address of NELAC outreach to the Indian Nations. Dr. Hershey asked for changes to the minutes from January 14, 1999. None were made although it was noted that the wording of Action Item Number 9 exists as it was stated in the meeting but that "unacceptable" should be understood to mean "unacceptably limited". Any correspondence with EPA will make this clear.

NEWS ON EPA'S NEW INFORMATION OFFICE

Ms. Nancy Wentworth was unable to attend the meeting. Ms. Dutrow provided a summary of this topic. Ms. Dutrow described the pending U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) formation of a new Information Office including the rationale and its anticipated location in the organizational structure of EPA. Ms. Wentworth will attend a future meeting of ELAB to discuss further details of this matter.

On the subject of EPA, a comment was made that minutes recently posted on the NELAC web site from a NELAC Board of Directors meeting (2/25/99) summarized a discussion of the possibility that EPA support for NELAP may be diminishing. Interest was expressed for Ms. Wentworth to provide some comment on this matter.

REVIEW OF PROPOSED CHANGES TO NELAC STANDARDS

ELAB was requested to provide comments on the proposed revisions to the NELAC standards. Following discussion among the Board members, it was agreed that many members were not prepared to discuss this topic during the meeting. Therefore, it was agreed that this discussion

would be take place during the next meeting of ELAB. It was also agreed that it would be useful if the Chair of the Quality Systems Committee, Mr. Joe Slayton, could participate in the discussion to provide clarification on specific text in NELAC Chapter 5, if needed. Ms. Trovato agreed to invite him.

ONGOING ISSUES

As agreed previously, the following issues were discussed as regular agenda items.

--Small Laboratory Issues

Dr. Evelyn Torres, Chair of the Small Laboratory Issues Workgroup, reported that she has not received any further comments on the matter of small laboratories and NELAC. Dr. Torres expressed her intent to mail copies of the ELAB final report to all individuals/organizations who had taken the time to provide comment on the small laboratory matter

--Sample Shipment Issues

The sample shipment conflict between EPA and Department of Transportation regulations was first discussed during the July 1, 1998 ELAB meeting. ELAB asked Mr. David Friedman for an update on EPA's progress in resolving this issue. (The EMMC Staff is working to resolve this matter.) Mr. Friedman noted that work is moving forward. A contractor will be reporting on what the EPA Programs currently have for sample shipment requirements and the information supporting the requirements.

Discussion continued on the type of study that could be performed to target acceptable shipment conditions. It was apparent that a variety of issues is involved. Mr. Friedman asked ELAB to define the sample shipment issue as clearly as possible so that EPA could better address the matter. Mr. Jerry Parr agreed to email the complete issue to Mr. Friedman.

Several Board members noted reports from earlier studies that may be useful in determining acceptable sample shipment conditions. Dr. Hershey requested that Board members forward any available information to Mr. Friedman by Wednesday, March 3, 1999.

Status of ELAB Recommendations

Ms. Dutrow offered to develop a system for cataloging and tracking progress on past ELAB recommendations and to make it available for use at a future ELAB meeting. This will include an ongoing tally of responsible parties and the status of the action.

TIMING OF ON-SITE ASSESSMENTS

ELAB addressed an issue forwarded to them by the NELAC Board of Directors. Specifically, the NELAC Board asked for ELAB opinion on the matter of whether a new on-site inspection needs to be conducted if an Accrediting Authority receives NELAP recognition and a previously-

inspected laboratory's last on-site had been done very recently and according to the NELAC standards. (This issues refers to the timing of the first Accrediting Authority recognitions in July 1999.)

The consensus was that attempts to accredit to a yet-unapproved standard would prove unworkable, and that under the NELAC standard inspections are required only every other year. It was felt this provision, coupled with "interim" status (and recommendation below), provides adequate flexibility to accrediting authorities for on-site laboratory assessments.

In this context, it was noted that the current NELAC Standard (section 4.5.1) specifies that interim status shall be entered into the National Database, which could put such a laboratory at a competitive disadvantage through no fault of its own. Following discussion, it was moved, seconded, and unanimously approved that ELAB recommend that:

the last sentence of section 4.5.1 *"The interim accreditation status is a matter of public record and shall be entered into the National Database"* be removed.

Mr. Parr agreed to prepare a draft of text responding to the NELAC question for ELAB review for the next meeting.

INDIAN NATIONS AND NELAC

Ms. Dutrow reviewed activities to include tribal authorities to be included in the NELAC process as voting members, and some of the issues involved. Ms. Trovato asked that this be tabled for a future meeting, considering the legal issues involved.

OPEN FORUM ISSUES

Discussion of the Open Forum issues was deferred for a future meeting.

FUTURE MEETINGS

It was determined that additional meetings would be necessary to address the issues still requiring resolution. The following dates were selected for future meetings, and the agenda items as listed below will be discussed.

--March 9

Open forum issues, proposed changes in the NELAC standards, timing of on-site

--April 20 (2-5pm)

Open forum issues, review of status of EPA's new Information Office, status of ELAB recommendations

--April 29 (2-5pm)

If needed, remaining issues from April 20, 1999.

ACTION ITEMS
ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD (ELAB) MEETING
MARCH 1, 1999

Item No.	Action Item	Date to be Completed
1.	Board members are to review the proposed standards and provide specific comments to Dr. Hershey for review at the next meeting.	3/5/99
2.	Ms. Trovato will invite Mr. Slayton to participate in the next meeting for discussion of Chapter 5 of the NELAC Standards	ASAP
3.	Dr. Torres will mail copies of the final small laboratories report to all commentors.	ASAP
4.	Board members will email to D. Friedman reports/studies on sample shipment.	3/3/99
5.	Mr. Parr will prepare draft text for ELAB review in response to the NELAC Board request for input on the timing of on-sites.	3/9/99
6.	Mr. Parr will email clarification to D. Friedman on sample shipment.	3/5/99
7.	Board members are to forward any available information on sample preservation to Mr. Friedman within 48 hours.	3/3/99
8.	Ms. Dutrow will collect past ELAB recommendations and develop a system by which they can be tracked.	4/16/99
9.	Ms. Trovato and Ms. Dutrow will review legal issues associated with involving tribal authorities as NELAC voting members.	4/20/99

PARTICIPANTS
ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD (ELAB) MEETING
MARCH 1, 1999

Name	Representing	Contact Information
Dr. J. Wilson Hershey, Co-Chair	ACIL	T: 717/656-2300 F: 717/656-0450 E: jwhershey@lancasterlabs.com
Ms. Ramona Trovato, Co-Chair	US EPA	T: 202/260-7778 F: 202/260-4103 E: trovato.ramona@epamail.epa.gov
Ms. Elizabeth Dutrow Designated Federal Officer	US EPA	T: 202/564-9061 F: 202/565-2441 E: dutrow.elizabeth@epamail.epa.gov
Ms. Janet Hall	Engineering Firms	T: 770/989-4200 F: 770/989-4462 E: janet_hall@iint.com
Dr. Kathy J. Dien Hillig	Chemical Manufacturer's Association	T: 313/246-6334 F: 313/246-5226 E: hilligk@basf.com
Dr. William G. Kavanagh (absent)	A2LA	T: 410/671-6756 F: 410/671-6720 E: william.g.kavanagh@cpmx.saic.com
Dr. Gary Kramer (absent)	Chemical Manufacturing Association	T: 505/881-0243 F: 505/881-7738 E: kramerga@flash.net
Mr. Jerry Parr	Catalyst Info. Res., L.L.C.	T: 303/670-7823 F: 303/670-2964 E: catalyst@eazy.net
Ms. Patricia O. Pomerleau	Society for Quality Assurance	T: 919/558-1341 F: 919/558-1300 E: pomerleau@ciit.org
Dr. Michael J. Smolen	World Wildlife Federation	T: 202/861-8354 F: 202/530-0743 E: smolen@wwfus.org
Dr. Evelyn Torres	Local Government	T: 703/404-5049 F: 703/404-5076 E: etorre@fcwa.fairfax.va.us
Dr. Allen Verstuyft	American Petroleum Institute	T: 510/242-1792 F: 510/242-5320 E: awve@chevron.com
Dr. Frieda White (absent)	Navajo Tribal Utility Authority	T: 520/729-5721 F: 520/729-2135 E: frieda_white@epamail.epa.gov
Ms. Sandra Wroblewski	AIHA	T: 847/320-2487 F: 847/320-4331 E: swroblew@kermperinsurance.com
Gene Tatsch (Contractor Support)	Research Triangle Institute	T: 919/541-6930 F: 828/628-0659 E: cet@rti.org
Ms. Marianne Lynch	USEPA/EMMC Staff	
Mr. David Friedman	USEPA/EMMC Staff	
Ms. Lynn Bradley	APHL	
Mr. Tony Pagliaro	ACIL	
Ms. Veronica Rath	AIHA	

Name	Representing	Contact Information
Ms. Betty Vedrane	Lafayette Consolidated Government	
Mr. Sam Hadeed	AMSA	
Ms. Jeanne Mourrain	USEPA	

Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board (ELAB) Meeting

**March 1, 1999
2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. EASTERN**

**US EPA
Room 911, West Tower
401 M Street, SW
Washington, DC**

AGENDA

Review of Advisory Committee Meeting Rules	Elizabeth Dutrow, DFO
Welcome, Review of Meeting Agenda	Wilson Hershey, Co-Chair Ramona Trovato, Co-Chair
Review of Actions Items from 1/14/99 Meeting (reference 1/14/99 ELAB meeting minutes)	Wilson Hershey
The News on EPA's New Information Office	Nancy Wentworth
Review of Suggested Changes to NELAC Chapter 5	Wilson Hershey
Review of Other Proposed Changes Important to ELAB Members	Wilson Hershey
Updates on Ongoing Issues: *Small Laboratories *Sample Shipment *Status of ELAB Recommendations	Wilson Hershey
Open Forum Issues - as identified 1/13/99 (reference 1/14/99 ELAB meeting minutes)	Wilson Hershey
Action Item Review	Ramona Trovato
Meeting Closure	Elizabeth Dutrow